



THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE RADIO ASSOCIATION OF ERIE

# QUA-RAE

NOVEMBER 1995

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Contesting  
Public Service  
ARES/Skywarn  
Classifieds  
and more....

## OFFICER ELECTIONS

Thursday, November 2

RAE Annual Meeting

## Radio Association of Erie

Post Office Box 844  
Erie, PA 16512

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Mem: F Lic: A  
Robert L. Schwimmer N3FAW  
129 E. Arlington Rd  
Erie, PA 16509-3603

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

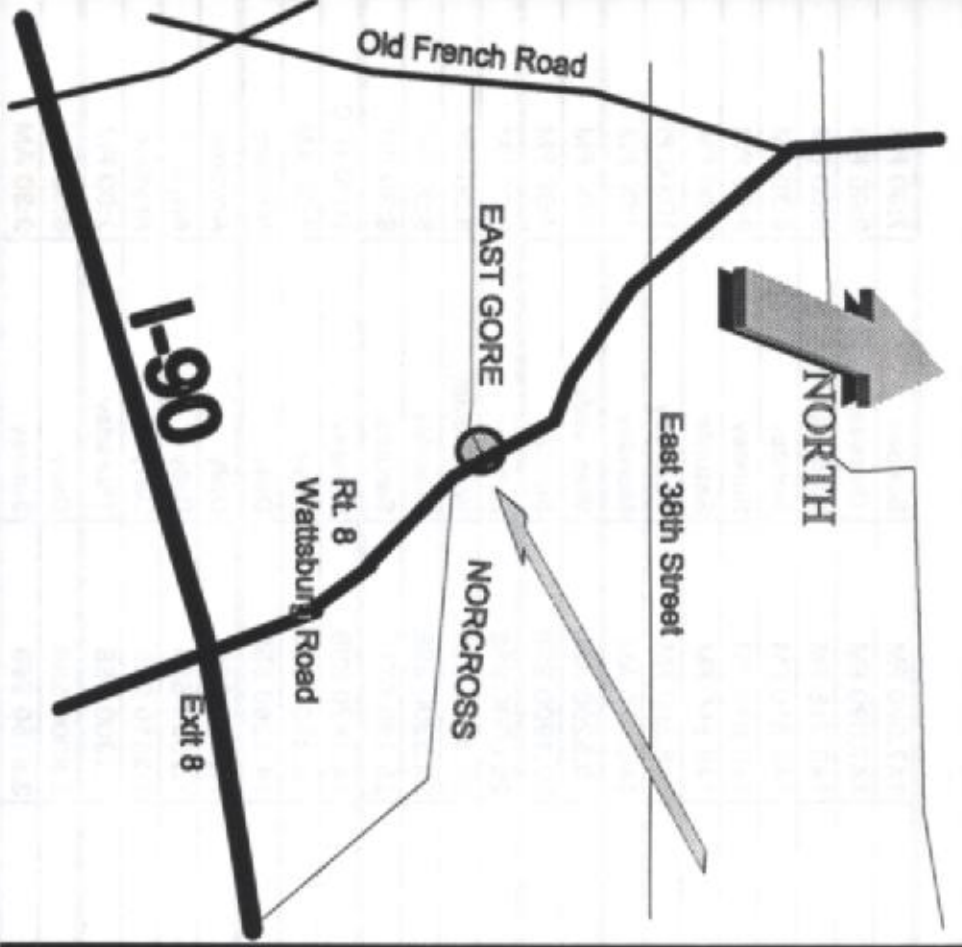
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

ERIE, PA

PERMIT NO. 266

**1995 RAE Christmas Party**  
Friday, December 1st  
At:  
Little Bit Of Country  
(Rt 8 (Wattsburg Road)  
and East Gore)  
Buffet with Baked Chicken,  
Stuffed Pork Chops,  
Baked Cod  
Mashed Potatoes  
Vegetables  
Salad, Dinner Rolls,  
Sherbet, Coffee, Tea, & Pop.  
(BYOB, if desired)  
\$13.00 a person  
Reservations and money  
due by November 20.  
Contact N3LPO Sue  
456-0500



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## Presidents Corner

Here it is November -- I hope everyone had a good time and fun taking part in the PA QSO Contest on the weekend of October 14 and 15.

I would like to say good luck to all the election people who are running for an office. As you all know the list is done and ready to be voted at the the November 2 meeting. Good Luck.

At this time I would like to thank Matt N3NTJ for all the work he did for the Special Events. Job well done, Matt.

**Sandy N3LKW** -- all your help with Hamfest, Skywam.

**Tom N3HPR** -- all the work for Skywam and ARES and every other job that was asked of you. Job well done.

**Chris KB3A** and **Debi N3TIL** -- all you did for Hamfest and the QSO Dinner also for taking over the Election Committee. Job well done.

**Karen KB3ALT** -- for doing the Treasurers reports and keeping us all in line. Job well done.

## VE Report

**Submitted by W3CG, Norma Vanderhoff, ARRL VE Liaison**

At the October test session at Villa Maria, the following upgraded their class of license: Donald Eller K3GYD of Erie to Amateur Extra, Donald Harrison KE4YLZ of Orange Park, Florida to Advanced, Gerald Young KF2XA of Mayville, NY to Amateur Extra, Arnold Smrcka N3UBZ of Union City to General, Diane Miller N3WCU of Fairview to Technician Plus, and Michilla La John N3WEJ of Lake City to Technician Plus.

A number of candidates also gained partial upgrades.

VEs who served at the session were Tom Plotrowski AA3GJ, Dick Blasco KY3D, Chris Robson KB3A, Bert Van Houten N3TPW, and yours truly, W3CG.

Test sessions are held at Villa Maria, 2551 W. 12th Street, on the first Saturday of each month, at 8:00 A.M. A free standing sign marks the entrance, and the building has its own name out front, "Hammermill Administration Building". It is actually only one door beyond the entrance we have used in past years.

At the September test session at Gannon, Robert Reisenweber W3BBO of Erie, upgraded to Amateur Extra class and Nicholas Cooling N3TOZ of Girard upgraded to General.

Qualifying for Technician were Carol and Randy Pyle of Franklin and Michilla La John of Lake City.

An important part of ham growth in the area is due to the testing field, but preparation must come first. The RAE is currently sponsoring radio classes, each Monday and Wednesday evening at Central High School, and those who desire help are welcome to

**Dick W3GZO** -- Vice President and all the work you put into the Education Classes. Job well done.

**Evelyn W3JQV** -- Secretary -- for coming to our aid when we needed someone. You have done a wonderful job.

I would like to now remind everyone that the Christmas Dinner is on Friday, December 1, 1995. RSVP by November 20th. Cost is \$14 a person.

Last but not least I would like to say thank you to **WB3EZY**'s XYL Barb for making our cookies for the monthly meetings. Also for donating a home made quilt for our Christmas Raffle. The cost is \$2.00 per ticket. Hope to hear from you all for the Christmas Dinner.

See you all at the November 2 meeting. Have a Happy and Safe Thanksgiving.

God Bless

73's

Sue N3LPO

attend. In charge of this program is Dick Bainbridge W3GZO, and also volunteering their time are Joe McLain KB3ALU who is teaching theory. Ron Seyboldt WB3DOM, who is teaching code, and Jim Salter WR4W, who also helps with code and theory when needed.

Another backbone of the RAE is the Elmer program with Don Eller K3GYD, in charge. If you are available to help others or if you need help, notify Don.

### PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE RADIO ASSOCIATION OF ERIE

THE RADIO ASSOCIATION OF ERIE IS A NON-PROFIT CLUB SERVING THE TRI-STATE AREA BY PROVIDING EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS DURING A CIVIL DISASTER, AS WELL AS PROVIDING COMMUNICATION SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS. THE CLUB MEETS AT 7:00 THE FIRST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT THE RED CROSS CHAPTER HOUSE, 4961 PITTSBURGH AVENUE, ERIE, PA. FOR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION CONTACT BOB SCHWIMMER, N3FAW AT 866-3027.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS EDITED BY DAVE ROSS, N3PYH. SUBMISSIONS ARE ACCEPTED AND ENCOURAGED. PLEASE MAKE ALL SUBMISSIONS VIA A 5 1/4" OR 3 1/2" PC COMPATIBLE FLOPPY, IF POSSIBLE. TYPEWRITTEN SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED IF PC DISKS ARE NOT AVAILABLE. FOR INFORMATION CALL 454-5407 EVENINGS OR WRITE TO:

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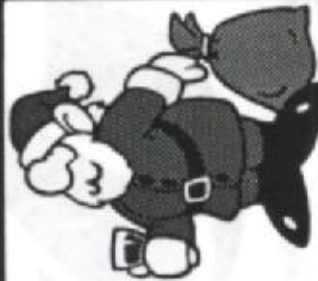
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## NETS

|                               |             |           |          |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| Conneaut Radio Club Net       | 147.390 FM  | Sunday    | 7:30 PM  |
| Radio Amateurs of Corry       | 147.090 FM  | Thursday  | 8:00 PM  |
| Ashtabula County ARC Net      | 146.715 FM  | Wednesday | 8:00 PM  |
| Tri-State RACES Emergency Net | 146.610 FM  | Sunday    | 6:30 PM  |
| ARES/Skywarn Net              | 146.610 FM  | Sunday    | 9:00 PM  |
| International Simplex Net     | 146.550 FM  | Saturday  | 8:00 PM  |
| The Aluminum Net              | 146.550 FM  | Saturday  | 10:00 PM |
| 2 Meter AM                    | 144.450 AM  | Monday    | 7:00 PM  |
| 6 Meter AM                    | 50.5200 AM  | Wednesday | 7:00 PM  |
| 6 Meter SSB Net               | 50.1900 SSB | Sunday    | 7:00 PM  |
| Lake Erie Emergency Net       | 29.0000 SSB | Sunday    | 8:00 PM  |
| Novice-Tech Net               | 28.4000 SSB | Wednesday | 8:30 PM  |
| Radio Amateurs of Corry (HF)  | 28.3300 SSB | Tuesday   | 8:00 PM  |
| Flintstone RTTY Net           | 28.280 RTTY | Saturday  | 8:30 PM  |
| QCWA National Net             | 14.3470 SSB | Sunday    | 2000 UTC |
| Erie - Fort Pierce Connection | 14.3400 SSB | Daily     | 8:00 AM  |
| County Hunters Net            | 14.3360 SSB | Daily     | Anytime  |
| Mid CARS Net                  | 7.2580 SSB  | Daily     | Anytime  |
| East CARS Net                 | 7.2550 SSB  | Daily     | Anytime  |
| South CARS Net                | 7.2510 SSB  | Daily     | Anytime  |
| Old Old Timers Club           | 7.2300 SSB  | Thursday  | 2:00 PM  |
| Rooster Net                   | 3.9900 SSB  | Daily     | 6:00 AM  |
| QCWA Chapter 122 Net          | 3.9150 SSB  | Sunday    | 9:30 AM  |
| PA Emergency Management Net   | 3.9050 SSB  | Sunday    | 9:00 AM  |
| 160 Meter Net                 | 1.8930 SSB  | Daily     | 7:00 PM  |

CUT HERE

## 1995 RAE Christmas Party



When? Friday, December 1st.  
Where? A Little Bit Of Country  
What? Buffet -- Chicken, Pork Chops, Cod, ...  
What else? BYOB  
How Much? \$13.00 per person  
Who? N3LPO, Sue (456-0500)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ CALLSIGN \_\_\_\_\_

HOW MANY? \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Money must be received by November 20.



CLASSIFIEDS

**10 Meter Transceiver** - \$135 Firm.  
Uniden HR2600 10 Meter rig. 25 Watt. AM, FM, CW, USB, LSB. Like brand new, in box with instruction book.  
Gene Robertson, N3RKN, 774-2090

**Kenwood TS-520 Transceiver** - \$450.  
Excellent Condition, In-box (Silent Key's rig).  
Dave Sublett, 825-0450

**Wanted: Old multi-band transmitter (80-10 mtr), receiver, and antenna.** Would prefer Heathkit, Motorola, Yaesu, or Swan that is not working but repairable. Also looking for straight key and speaker.  
Cynthia Rushon, WB3CNU, 353 W23rd St. Erie, PA 16502.

**WANTED: Used Speaker Mike**  
for Alinco, Midland, etc. for 2 Meter HT.  
Cathy Bergkessel N3TUE 871-7778 (leave message)

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Radio Commission Ponders Baud Limits

By Elizabeth Conover Mung

GEARVAK! Investigative Reporter

Concerned by reports of increased packet collisions, the Radio Commission is considering steps to enforce the 55 baud limit. "It has come to our attention that speeds as high as 300 and sometimes 1200 baud are being used," said Arnold Dargush, Director of the Commission's Baud Enforcement Division (BED). The resulting collisions are causing heavy damage on the bands rendering some frequencies unusable until the channels can be swept.

"We had one case where bit litter completely shut down 145.01 MHz over a wide area," declared Dargush. "Frequency sweeping is not only expensive, but while a frequency is being swept of collided data, others are being deprived of it's use because of the thoughtlessness of speeders," said Dargush. And he added: "Remember, every littered bit hurts." - N8JR



**PRESIDENT:**  
N3BZL - Cliff  
N3NTJ - Matt

**VICE-PRESIDENT**  
KB2OUA - Tom  
N3PYH - Dave

**SECRETARY:**  
KB3AOL - Mike

**TREASURER:**  
KB3ALT - Karen

Minutes

Radio Association of Erie

Membership Meeting

October 5, 1995

N3LPO President, Sue called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. with 46 members attending on a blustery stormy evening. Visitors welcomed: KE4YZ Don Harrison of Fairview, also Cynthia Rushon WB3CNU, would like to become active again after about 15 years hiatus. Cynthia graduated from the Erie Institute of Technology in 1985 as a certified electronic technician. She is looking for equipment and can do her own repairs.

N3TOZ Nick Cooling upgraded to General and received a hardy "Yo". N3WCU Diane, twin sister of N3TIL Debi, is the 4th family member to receive a ham license. Newest ham on the block is N3WEJ, Mickey LaJohn, XYL Steve N3SRD, and already helping with club activities.

N3NTJ Matt made the motion to accept the minutes as printed in the QUA-RAE, seconded by Mike, KB3AOL.

W3GZO Vice President, Dick, gave the treasurers' report for KB3ALT Treasurer, Karen who was enduring a bout of laryngitis.

N3HPR Tom critiqued the Board meeting agenda updating the Election Committee progress, Hamfest review with future dates reserved thru the year 2001. A very positive response of overall Hamfest activities have been received and welcomed by all who worked to make it a success. The October 1st deadline for ARRL approval will be met in time for printing in January QST. Tom also read the first of two readings regarding the By-Laws to the membership.

N3LKW Sandy and N3WEJ Mickey updated ARES/Skywarn directory data at the entrance table. Current information will be noted in the new telephone tree to be distributed at the ARES seminar on October 19th, effective about November 1st.

N3LKW Matt, Public Service Chairman stated that activities are tapering off and will be closing out the year with CQ Santa Claus and First Night Erie.

N3PYH Dave, Editor thanked KB3A Chris for submitting an excellent article on the PA QSO Party. Dave welcomes membership input.

W3GZO Dick, Vice President and Education Chairman, reported that after a rocky start, classes are going well with 1 General, 4 Technicians, and 10 Novice students. Instructors are KB3ALU Joe, theory; WB3DOM Ron, code; and WR4W Jim, substitute.

KB3A Chris presented an in depth report of the PA 38th annual PA QSO Party on October 14th and 15th. Chris stressed club effort and had complete printed information

available. Both computer and hand logs should be in by November 11th and can be brought to the November club meeting. 2 Meter activity was scheduled for Sunday, October 15th between 4 - 6 p.m.

KB3ALY Bob reported on the EMS Airport 'tabletop' drill. Bob stated that approximately 40++ representatives attended from virtually every area fire department, police force, hospital, etc. It was emphasized that the Hams received high marks for their efforts in past years. Every 3rd year (1996) is the scheduled simulated drill with next year's drill involving the crash of two planes.

KB3A Chris, Hamfest Chairman reported a successful '95 Hamfest citing a good working personnel relationship; profitable returns; and rave reviews heard on the bands. Chris stated that the majority of committees will be returned and welcomes help from new hams next year.

N3HPR Tom invited everyone to the October 19th annual ARES meeting held at Hamot Hospital. Beginning at 6:15, photo IDs will be taken for those who still need them; followed by a coffee and doughnut 1/2 hour at 6:30 p.m. Greeters will be at the front entrance and visitors are welcome. There is seating capacity for approximately 140. Tom scheduled an impressive list of speakers from Emergency Services and the evening promises to be both fun and informative.

KB3A Chris, Election Committee Chairman, called for nominations from the floor for 1996 RAE officers. WB3DOM Ron nominated KB2OUA Tom for Vice President. There were no other nominations. WB3KGT Tony moved nominations be closed seconded by N3HPR Tom.

N3EOY Dave, Skywarn E.C., reported 148 members now enrolled with 5 new members completing the recent class. It is expected that Skywarn activities will be slow until snowfall.

N3LPO Sue, President, reminded everyone to have their reservations in for the Christmas party by November 20th. Pop will be furnished, BYOB and \$13.00.

WB3EZY Red, conducted the 50/50 with N3TOZ Nick the lucky winner.

N3HPR Tom made the motion to adjourn, seconded by N3NTJ Matt at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn Baker,  
Secretary W3JOV



The PA QSO Party - Finale

by Chris Robson KB3A

Main Question is "How did you do?". Expect to hear that alot the next coming weeks and if you don't know what they are talking about, you must have been on vacation in Antarctica for the past 3 months!

After the dust had settled, I realized, I had heard more stations on both inside Pennsylvania and outside Pennsylvania that ever before! The Pennsylvania QSO Party is the granddaddy of all QSO Parties and it was so evident by the amount of participation from the different ARRL Sections with high qso counts. Some said if you can't beat 'em, join 'em; some just returned the favor since so many PA stations work their state Qso Parties; still others actually look forward to working Our Party, it's just that much fun.

As a club effort, I am very proud of the Radio Association of Erie for the amount of member turnout. I had an opportunity to talk to Doug Maddox W3HDH on Monday after the PA Qso Party, and he commented on how many Erie station they had heard and he was impressed by our numbers. I had a small misfortune of being just outside the skip zone for most of the stations in the city of Erie ( amazing since I'm only 12 miles west of Erie), but I managed to work a few of the many Erie stations.

It was also a pleasure to work some of our club members that decided to venture the roadways of PA to give us new counties. Anyone that has worked mobile or portable can appreciate their effort. I personally heard Dick W3NGO in Clinton Co.; Frank KD3D in McKean Co.; and Lee WA3HJC from various PA counties. If anyone wants to make an effort portable, talk to these guys.

I was fortunate enough to have another station operating from my QTH running a Multi-single operation. Debi N3TIL operated with Steve N3SRD, Micki N3WEJ, and Aaron N3WAH. Debi being control op, offered the opportunity to the rest on that "gang" to work HF. As a seasoned contester, my memory of my early days of learning the ropes of contesting had faded until I watched this group of determined hams banging out their initial contacts and struggling with info, and seeing the excitement in getting a string of contacts. I think the contest bug bit all them hard!!!

As far as logging, the computer has made life good after the contest. In the past, we had to look forward to reading the cryptic text of hand written logs and it would take a month to get the log in order. My log was completely done by 1 1/2 hours after the contest by using the computer. As we mentioned earlier, anyone that needs help with their logs, just contact some of us computer loggers and we can give you a hand with your log.

Finally, I wish to thank each and every member of the Radio Association of Erie that picked up a mike or pounded a key or keyboard for the club in the PA QSO Party. This is a club event just like Field Day, Hamfest, or Christmas Party. I'm happy to see club activity strong in our club, because that is what the club is all about, the club is not about business meeting, elections, repeaters, or equipment, it is our team work, effort, and operating as Amateur Radio Operators that make us who we are. We should be proud, we showed them where Erie County IS!! Thank you.

Chris Robson  
5560 Bear Creek Rd. Faiview, PA 16415  
Phone: 814-474-1211

CQ TO DEBUT NEW PUBS FOR CONTESTERS, VHFERS

CQ Communications Inc plans a mid-December debut of a new magazine, CQ VHF. It will be "aimed at ham radio operators active on frequencies above 50 MHz." Richard Moseson, NW2L, will be the editor.

Publisher Richard Ross, K2MGA, said that "CQ VHF will serve the specific needs and interests of hams whose operational and technical interests exist above 50 MHz." Moseson said there will be a mix of articles for the new ham as well as the more experienced operator.

The first issue of CQ VHF will be dated January/February 1996, but the magazine will be published monthly beginning with the March 1996, issue.

CQ Communications also will introduce CQ Contest, beginning in January 1996 and planned for ten issues a year. The editor will be CQ World-Wide Contest Director Bob Cox, K3EST. "One of the principal goals for CQ Contest will be its international focus, scope and depth," CQ said. "The magazine will concentrate on coverage of people, analysis, techniques, reporting and technology." CQ said the new magazine would "in no way signal the abandonment of contest reporting in its parent magazine, CQ." (Source: The ARRL Letter)

Club Calendar

NOVEMBER 1995 Notes: SE = Special Event, HF = Hamfest, TST = Contest, QP = QSO Party

| SUNDAY                                                                                             | MONDAY              | TUESDAY             | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY                                             | FRIDAY               | SATURDAY                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                    |                     |                     |           |                                                      |                      |                                                                                                                       |
|                                                                                                    |                     |                     |           |                                                      |                      |                                                                                                                       |
|                                                                                                    |                     |                     |           |                                                      |                      |                                                                                                                       |
| 5<br>Hungary CW TST<br>ARRL NOVEMBER<br>SWEEPSTAKES TST<br>APRIL INT EME TST<br>INT POLICE ASC TST | 6<br>Hungary CW TST | 7<br>Hungary CW TST | 8         | 9<br>Hungary CW TST<br>RAE MEETING<br>ELECTION NIGHT | 10<br>Hungary CW TST | 11<br>Hungary CW TST<br>ARRL NOVEMBER<br>SWEEPSTAKES TST<br>APRIL INT EME TST<br>INT POLICE ASC TST<br>ST LOUIS MO SE |
| 12                                                                                                 | 13                  | 14                  | 15        | 16                                                   | 17                   | 18<br>ARRL NOV<br>SWEEPSTAKES<br>TURKEY,NC SE                                                                         |
| 19<br>ARRL<br>NOVEMBER<br>SWEEPSTAKES                                                              | 20                  | 21                  | 22        | 23                                                   | 24                   | 25<br>CQ WW DX TST<br>PLYMOUTH<br>PLANTATION SE                                                                       |
| 26<br>CQ WW DX TST<br>PLYMOUTH<br>PLANTATION SE<br>Wilkes-Barre SE                                 | 27                  | 28                  | 29        | 30                                                   |                      |                                                                                                                       |

ARES SET



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Art Paavola, D.V.M.  
Tom McClain, D.V.M.

Jeff Paavola, D.V.M.



snow flurries and six degrees, you're probably not hearing Miami. These clues are among the most valuable.

#### IX. STATION LISTINGS

An essential tool for any DXer is a good station listing. This will help identify what's being received, as well as provide a way to contact the station being heard.

For North American AM stations, one essential tool is The NRC AM Radio Logbook, now in its 13th Edition. It includes day and night antenna and power information, format, hours of operation, address, verified signers, network affiliations, etc. Price is \$19.95 for US, \$20.95 for Canadian, three dollars cheaper for NRC Members. To order write NRC Publications, Box 164, Mannsville NY 13661-0164 USA. NRC also publishes FM and TV Logs. To become a member (highly recommended) and receive a year's worth of 'DX News', send \$24.00 for US, \$25.00 for Canadian to: NRC Subscription Center, Box 118, Poquonock, CT 06064-0118 USA. All other countries, write for price information.

Another concise and inexpensive directory is the M Street Radio Directory, published annually. The M Street listing includes frequency, power, directionality, format, address, phone number, and other listings less important to DXing. M Street also is indexed by call letter order and by frequency. The M Street directory costs \$29.95 + p/h. It can be purchased directly from M Street at 800-248-4242 or +1 212 473 4668 voice, or +1 212 473 4626 fax. The address is M Street Corp., 304 Park Ave S Floor 7, New York, NY 10010 USA.

Another guide for VHF-FM DXers is Bruce Elving's annual FM Atlas. This includes maps showing every VHF-FM transmitter in North America, plus listings by state and frequency indicating power, stereo status, format, subcarriers, and slogans. FM Atlas does not include addresses or phone numbers. It can be purchased directly from Bruce Elving, PO Box 336, Esko MN 55733-0336. It costs \$10.95 + \$1.05 p/h.

Another listing is the Broadcasting Yearbook, which is available at some larger libraries. The Canadian Almanac and Directory includes call letters, frequency, and addresses for Canadian stations.

For listings outside North America, consult the World Radio TV handbook, published annually and available through your local bookstore or radio specialty mail order outlets such as the Radio Collection and CRB Publishing.

#### CONCLUSION

Broadcast band DXing is an exciting way to hear the sounds of cities and towns around the nation and even around the world. It doesn't require hundreds of dollars of expensive equipment or huge antennas on the roof. All it asks of the would-be DXer is time, patience, and knowledge. Have fun!

#### THANKS TO...

Bob Foxworth, Garret W. Gengler (antenna ideas), Bob Parnass, Paul Schleck (Superadio information), and Bruce Wenner, along with anyone else I may have forgotten.

Scott Fybush - fybush@world.std.com  
Earl Higgins - higgins@tiss.decnet.mdc.com

### Erie County A.R.E.S.

Thanks to all who attended the fall A.R.E.S. meeting on October 19, 1995 at Hamot Hospital auditorium. Those of you that attended received a new revised telephone tree. For those who missed the meeting the phone tree will be available at the R.A.E. club meeting on November 2, 1995. As a reminder the Simulated Emergency Test (SET) will be held Saturday, November 11, 1995. The new telephone tree will be activated sometime that morning. Please advise me if you can not pick up a phone tree at the R.A.E. club meeting, I will mail one to you.

The A.R.E.S./Skywarn net meets every Sunday evening at 9:00 p.m. on the 146.01/61 repeater. Check in when you can to be informed of the latest events with ARES and Skywarn.

73,  
Tom McClain N3HPR

#### PUBLIC SERVICE

##### Volunteers Needed...

**First Night Erie**  
December 31 (New Years Eve) 4 p.m - Midnight  
Downtown Erie

#### CONFESSIONS OF A NEWBIE QSO-PARTIER

By N3PYH, Dave Ross

After participating in my first ever PA QSO Party, I have to admit I've come away a lot more experienced, and with a great deal of respect for the more seasoned contesters in our company.

Like many who participated this year, I had family obligations that kept me from devoting the weekend to the contest, but it also gave me a break from the radio to regain some composure...something I started to lose near the end of Sunday. (I caught myself giving my call as NOVEMBER - PAPA - THREE - YANKEE - HOTEL. Hmm...I'll bet the guys on the other end were thinking NP??? Must have been my subconscious *wishing* I was in the Virgin Islands...)

I gave myself a goal prior to the contest, and then committed myself by making it public to KB3MI before the contest started. My goal was for 200 contacts, and never having done the contest before, I didn't really know if that was too high or too low for my ability, but at least it gave me a benchmark. As it was, with 180 contacts, I fell just short of my goal, but now I have a target for next year. Of course, a background in statistics has taught me that it's all in presentation -- you see, with 9 hours of participation I had a *statistically adjusted* QSO count of 537...well, at least it makes ME feel better...

I never had a real aversion to tube rigs, until October 14, 1995. Hunt and pounce does not like tube rigs and a random length dipole with a tuner. Chasing QSOs up and down the band gives you plenty of practice with tuning the rig on the fly. Next time -- solid state. On the other hand, when I saw the SWR creep up I didn't worry too much about the finals, a mixed blessing.

The QSO Party wasn't my first taste of contesting: I worked the last (and probably last ever) Novice Roundup this year, 100% CW. My QSO rate in the NR was a lot higher than the QSO Party, since I grabbed a frequency and held it racking up the contacts in pileups that really gave an adrenalin rush. With the double-scoring for 80 meter CW contacts, I planned on working primarily CW during the party. To help get ready for what I knew would be high CW speeds, I had been practicing what I call high speed contacts in the evening on 80 meters. This provided an added benefit of preparing me for the Extra CW exam, and in fact Supermorse was saying that I was pretty much ready for the 20 wpm test (sweaty palms and all). All this practice didn't prepare me for what I was to hear in the QSO party, and I completed a grand total of 1 CW contact. After listening to about six exchanges with one down-state ham,

To volunteer contact **Matt, N3NTJ**, at 864-3809, or after the Sunday 2 Meter Nets, or sign up at a RAE Club Meeting.  
Or E-Mail Matt at **N3NTJMATT@AOL.COM** or **WB3DWM@KNIGHT.GANNON.EDU**

I had his call and county, and I answered his CQ at about 20 wpm. He came back at about 35, and then I listened to his next two contacts to figure out what my serial number was. It took a total of about 5 minutes to put together a contact with him that lasted about 15 seconds. Off to the phone subband.

I rarely work phone on HF. Check that. I never work phone on HF. I did pick up an older Asiatic mike at the Warren Hamfest last year, wired it up for the rig, and checked it to be sure it worked. Hollering into the mike during the contest, I was able to get the output to 50 watts. Not QRP, but then half what I normally run with the rig. Next year, an amplified mike.

Not having used the mike too often on HF, I never fooled with the VOX much. All it took was calling CQ **CONTEST** to show me why you want VOX for a contest. Not having the time to fine tune the VOX, it was either false-tripping or late-tripping, and I was having a tough time typing the exchange in the logging program and then keying the mike again in time to make another contact. So, VOX operation lasted about as long as my CW contact.

If anything DID go right for me, it was my lowly (literally) dipole. Only about 15 feet high, it proved to have a lot better signal strength than the tower mounted vertical for everything except the local and west-coast contacts. The low angle of radiation of the vertical sent my signal right over their heads, and vice-versa. The low dipole proved just the ticket for the PA 80 and 40 meter contacts. As a matter of fact, I've never seen as big a difference in signal strength between the two antennas as I did during this contest. I'm already thinking about a different site next year that should provide plenty of space for a great 80 meter antenna.

When it was all over, there was nothing as pleasing as hearing about all the Erie contacts. I never went into the contest with any fantasies about winning, but I hoped to have at least a few points to contribute to the club effort. Over and over, I heard comments about the number of Erie hams participating in the party. It was the group effort that made me proud to be from Erie, and every ham who participated in any way should also be proud. No matter how the final standings leave the RAE, at least we can all know we gave it our best shot and let the RAE be heard!



## AM/FM DXing (Part II)

By Scott Fybush and Earl Higgins

### WHAT'S OUT THERE TO LISTEN TO?

There are over 10,000 radio stations in the United States alone. It's important to have some idea of what to expect to hear. A good directory is important (see STATION LISTINGS below), but it's essential to know what the station information means.

For mediumwave, North American frequencies fall into three basic classes:

- **CLEAR CHANNEL:** These frequencies are 540, 640-780, 800-900, 940, 990-1140, 1160-1220, and 1500-1580 kHz. Clear channels are home to one or two 50,000 watt powerhouse signals which can be heard reliably in half the country or more. Other stations also occupy the clear channels, frequently using less than 1000 watts and very restrictive antenna patterns. In recent years, the US FCC has added many more low power stations to the clear channels, making reception of the big, primary, stations more interference prone than it once was, but providing excellent hunting for the serious mediumwave DXer. Also, the clear channels are the primary hunting area for Latin American DX due to the relatively small number of North American stations on them.

- **LOCAL:** These frequencies are 1230, 1240, 1340, 1400, 1450, and 1490 kHz, and are sometimes referred to as the 'graveyard' channels by DXers. Stations on local channels can use a maximum of 1000 watts (somewhat higher outside the US). At night, these six frequencies tend to become chaotic, as the hundred-plus stations on each channel cause each other tremendous interference. Although the primary service area of these stations may be twenty miles or less, these stations have been known to reach well over a thousand miles under good conditions. Identifying distant stations on these channels requires a directional antenna, a good ear, and plenty of patience. The National Radio Club keeps distance records for all of the stations on these channels and publishes them in their bulletin, [DX News](#), regularly.

- **REGIONAL:** These are all the remaining channels, including the expanded band frequencies of 1610-1700 kHz. U.S. stations on these frequencies tend to be restricted to 5000 watts, although a recently signed international treaty allows for the possibility of 10,000 or even 50,000 watt stations on these frequencies if they do not interfere with other stations. In practice, only Canada has yet assigned high power stations on these frequencies. While not as noisy as the locals, reception on regional channels can be quite interference prone, with a listener able to identify three or four stations coming in simultaneously on one frequency. Most regional, or class III stations, use directional antennas to reduce interference with distant stations.

On VHF-FM, the American FCC has reduced its restrictions on power and antenna height considerably. Today, VHF-FM stations are allowed up to 50,000 watts from a 150 meter antenna in the Northeast and California; 100,000 watts from a 610 meter antenna elsewhere. Many stations, however, serve much smaller areas. These "Class A" stations use only 6000 watts or less. They were formerly restricted to just the following frequencies: 92.1, 92.7, 93.5, 94.3, 95.3, 95.9, 96.7, 97.7, 98.3, 99.3, 100.1, 100.9, 101.7, 102.3, 103.1, 103.9, 104.9, 105.5, 106.3, and 107.1 MHz. While the FCC no longer restricts class A stations to those frequencies, most are still found there. Likewise, only a few of the high-power stations are found on the old class A channels. For stations with extremely high antenna, the FCC mandates that transmitter power be reduced proportionately; thus a station with only 430 watts from a 220 meter antenna will reach about as far as a 3000 watt signal from the usual 91 meter antenna will.

### TIPS FOR BEGINNING

The most important element for beginning DXers is to get to know the dial. Spend a few hours scanning up and down the dial both during the day and at night. At night, many of the clear-channel 50kw stations, particularly the non-directional ones, should be easy to hear. Learn all the local stations. Find out which ones sign off at sunset, which ones go off late at night, and which stay on all night. This will affect which distant stations can be received. If you have a local station on all night, you shouldn't expect to hear another station on that frequency without some tedious nulling.

Experiment with radio placement. As you slowly turn the radio, observe its directional characteristics. The Superadio III will receive signals coming from the front and back of the set the best, and attenuate the signals coming in 'off the side' of the set. You can use this to your advantage and log several stations on a single frequency.

By all means, keep a log of all new stations you hear; someday you'll be glad you did! Better yet, keep it on the computer; that way you can share it with others on the net. After a few months of listening; you should have a list of 200-300 stations you've heard. Most of these will be your 'regulars', audible almost daily. Beyond that, you can hunt for the rarer stuff. Try for all 50 US states (very, very difficult), or 20 countries (fairly easy in most locations). Within a few years, you'll likely have heard a thousand or so stations and have a very interesting logbook. Here's a 'beginner's target list' of widely heard clear channel AM stations to start you out; from most locations in North America you should be able to hear all but four or five of these fairly easily.

|          |           |               |           |           |                |
|----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| 540 CBE  | Canada SA | Matrousa      | 840 WHAS  | USA       | TX Louisville  |
| 540 XEMA | Mexico SL | Rio Verde     | 850 KOA   | USA       | CO Denver      |
| 540 KFT  | USA CA    | Los Angeles   | 860 CJBC  | Canada    | ON Toronto     |
| 550 NKN  | USA TN    | Memphis       | 870 WML   | USA LA    | New Orleans    |
| 560 WFAN | USA NY    | New York      | 880 WGBS  | USA NY    | New York       |
| 570 WMAQ | USA IL    | Chicago       | 890 WLS   | USA IL    | Chicago        |
| 580 KXBR | USA CA    | San Francisco | 900 XHM   | Mexico DF | Mexico City    |
| 590 KXBR | USA OH    | Cincinnati    | 900 CHM   | Canada NB | Moncton        |
| 600 KXBR | USA CA    | San Francisco | 910 XHM   | Mexico DF | Mexico City    |
| 610 KXBR | USA OH    | Cincinnati    | 920 XHM   | Canada NB | Moncton        |
| 620 KXBR | Mexico DF | Mexico City   | 1020 XHKA | USA PA    | Pittsburgh     |
| 730 XSE  | Canada ON | Toronto       | 1030 WBE  | USA MA    | Boston         |
| 740 CBL  | Canada ON | Toronto       | 1040 WBO  | USA IA    | Des Moines     |
| 750 KSN  | USA GA    | Atlanta       | 1070 CMA  | Canada NB | Moncton        |
| 760 KXZ  | USA MI    | Detroit       | 1070 XOX  | USA CA    | Los Angeles    |
| 770 MABC | USA NY    | New York      | 1100 WMBE | USA OH    | Cleveland      |
| 780 WGBM | USA IL    | Chicago       | 1120 XNCK | USA MO    | Saint Louis    |
| 800 KXZ  | North Am. | Bonafide      | 1160 KSL  | USA UT    | Salt Lake City |
| 805 XEOR | Mexico ON | Juarez        | 1180 WQAM | USA NY    | Rochester      |
| 810 WYU  | USA NY    | Schenectady   | 1200 WJAI | USA TX    | San Antonio    |
| 815 WYU  | USA TX    | Fort Worth    | 1210 WQGL | USA PA    | Philadelphia   |
| 830 WQGL | USA MI    | Kalamazoo     |           |           |                |

### SOME ADVANCED IDEAS

Once you've mastered the basics, here are some suggestions for areas of specialty DX:

- **QSLing:** Since broadcasters by and large don't use the "Q-codes" so popular in Ham and shortwave DX, QSLs are called 'veries' or verification letters by mediumwave and VHF-FM DXers. You'll probably have to send a letter to the station's chief engineer (names of actual verification signers can be found in the NRC AM Log). Expect verification in card form from the 50kw AM stations, and verification letters from just about everybody else. Small stations are often excited to find out they've been heard thousands of miles away, but you'll need to take special care to explain to them exactly what you want as they are likely to not know what a 'verie' is. Also, remember to always include return postage with your request.

- **DX Tests.** A few stations still run special DX tests, usually arranged for either The NRC or The IRCA (International Radio Club of America) and published in advance in their respective bulletins (another reason to join!). In the past year alone, the following outstanding feats were accomplished via DX Tests: Hawaii (KUAI-720) was heard as far away as Ontario and Pennsylvania; New Jersey (via WJJC-1510) made it west of the Mississippi; and New Mexico (KHAC-880) made it to the East Coast! These are all fairly difficult states for most DXers (unless, of course, you happen to live in or near them).

- **Equipment Tests:** Some stations run experimental tests with their daytime power after local midnight, in accordance with US FCC and Canadian CRTC rules. Often these will be late Sunday night/Monday morning, when some stations sign off for maintenance (although not as many as used to do so). For example, in Chicago Illinois, many DXers have logged KOMO-1000 from Seattle Washington, testing when Chicago local WLUP goes off on Monday mornings; thankfully Monday mornings just happen to be the time when KOMO seems to like to test with their non-directional day pattern. This makes an otherwise almost impossible state relatively easy around the midwestern US.

- **Sunrise/sunset DXing.** Lots of interesting mediumwave DX can be had when your receiving station and/or the transmitter are in only partial darkness. It's possible to hear distant daytime-only stations this way. This requires a lot of

skill, since there may be only ten or fifteen minutes in which to try. In fact most mediumwave DXers log the greatest number of stations in the hour or two right around local sunset, especially in the Fall and Winter months. Don't be surprised if, say, tiny KOKB in Blackwell, Oklahoma blasts right through CBJ and other East Coast powerhouse stations on 1580, for a few minutes right around Blackwell sunset! Anything can happen in the turbulent sunset and sunrise hours.

- **Transatlantic/Transpacific DX.** Some DXers in North America specialize in trying to receive signals on the mediumwave band from across the ocean. This requires outstanding propagation characteristics and plenty of patience (a nice, quiet coastal location can yield some amazing results).

- **FM Subcarriers and Stereo.** VHF-FM stations are allowed to transmit separate programming on a subcarrier. This requires a special decoder (one source is Bruce Elving's FM Atlas; see address below.) FM stations use their SCA (Secondary Communications Authority) subcarriers for transmitting data, background music, ethnic programming, and more. Some AM stations now transmit in stereo. With an AM stereo receiver, you can hear stereo signals from thousands of miles away.

- **Meteor Scatter.** The most masochistic of all VHF-FM DXers attempt to hear VHF-FM signals reflected from --yes, it's true-- meteors in the atmosphere. These DXers learn to identify stations on the basis of a few seconds' listening.

### IDENTIFYING YOUR CATCH

Radio stations in the United States are required to identify with their full call letters and city of license once an hour, between 10 minutes before and 10 minutes after the top of the hour. Canadian stations are never required to identify, and many never use any identifier other than "Q107" or "Toronto's 590 AM." It's therefore important to use other clues:

- **Time announcements.** These can tell you at least what time zone a station is in. If there's only one or two stations on a frequency in a given time zone, this makes identification easier.

- **Format.** If you have a list of stations that includes formats, use it. That includes knowing what network a station uses, whether the station uses a satellite-delivered music format, what slogans the station might use, etc.

- **Local color.** You might be able to hear names of cities or streets or notable local personalities mentioned during commercials, newscasts, talk shows, or weather forecasts. If the announcer says, "Here's the weather for the beaches today..." the station you're hearing probably isn't in North Dakota (although note, interestingly, there IS a TOWN called Beach, North Dakota; go figure). Likewise, if the forecast is